Surára
Pakidái
Shiriana

/74 cont./

6. Tribute payments and greeting ceremonial

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Two or three times a year a Xiriána chief and 18-20 warriors of this tribe come to the Surára as well as to the Pakidái, in order to collect tribute from their satellites (see also pp. 13 and 19). This visit is always carried out /75/ according to a regular protocol. First the chiefs squat down opposite each other, place the right hand on the left shoulder of the other, and hold the left hand in front of the mouth. They remain in this position for about two hours and, singing, exchange their news (345). The warriors of

345. I, too, was greeted in this fashion by the Surára chief as well as by the Pakidái chief.

the Xiriána and Surára or Pakidái stand around in a circle and listen, their faces immobile. All the women and children remain lying in their hammocks during the ceremonial, or they sit with anxious faces by their hearths. When the greeting is ended, the Surára or the Pakidái chief makes a sign, whereupon his men run off and fetch knives, axes, pots, etc., and also bananas and pupunha fruits, which they put down in front of the Xiriána chief. The latter picks up the objects and distributes them to his warriors, one after the other. When each is richly laden, they leave the maloka with measured step and disappear into the forest. The Xiriána chief is now the only one left behind. For him, however, particularly valuable objects must be brought. Above all, it is now the duty of the Surára or Pakidái chief to offer precious things of his own, perhaps a woven hammock which was given him by civilized people, a large pot, a bush knife, or a particularly beautiful chain of glass beads. Along with these, he usually sets down a basket of bananas and pupunha fruits. When the Xiriána chief, finally satisfied, nods his head, the Surára or Pakidái at last feel relieved. There is now a concluding dialogue sung by the two chiefs, whereupon the Xiriána chief rises and, heavily loaded for his part, strides toward the forest where his warriors are

619 /75 cont./
651 already waiting for him. After such a visit, the Surára and Pakidái
576 are thoroughly stripped, but at least the constraint under which
574 they were put during these hours has been removed, and one soon hears them laughing and joking again (346).

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346. For traveling investigators who come into contact with tribes of this region it is also very important to make sure, in offering presents and trade articles, that valuable objects are held back at first, because the chief always takes his share last. A visitor who is not familiar with this mentality and stands empty-handed at the end would incur the enmity of the chief and thus of the entire tribe from the outset.

7. Making a Living

433 a) General
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241 At present the Surára and Pakidái are in a state of transition from an exploitative to a productive economy. The traditional means of acquiring food, hunting and gathering, still played a dominant role among these Indians at the time of my visit, but I could see that most of the members of the tribe, especially the men, already manifested a great interest in agriculture, which had
[622] been introduced a generation or two before. The chiefs in particular proved to be shining models, for they set a good example in
000 all the work in the roça (forest clearing) (347). According to their

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347. The myth about the origin of the banana (see p. 249) clearly shows that the Surára and Pakidái were formerly only hunters and gatherers.